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Memorial

of

Mrs. Grace W. Thwing,

By Her Son,

Rev. Edward Y. Thwing.

Boston:
1865.

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TO

A WIDE CIRCLE

OF BEREAVED FRIENDS,

AND TO THOSE ESPECIALLY

WHOSE KIND MINISTRIES OF LOVE

HAVE BEEN SHARED BY THE

DEPARTED AND HER FAMILY,

THIS MEMORIAL

IS

INSCRIBED.

MEMORIAL.

Grace Welch Barnes was born at West Brookfield, Mass., July 12, 1789. Her parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Barnes, were persons of eminent piety, and trained their seven children in the truths and practice of religion. They, and their parents also, were active promoters of Christian enterprise, and cheerfully gave of their property to the maintenance of the institutions of the gospel. The site where now the Congregational meeting-house stands, facing the beautiful green at West Brookfield, was a gift of this family to the parish. Not a few of the pastors of this ancient church, founded a century and half ago, have had reason to rejoice in their helpful sympathy and co-operation through many generations down to the present time.

In her early life, Grace was characterized by a quiet, dignified demeanor, which secured for her the respect as well as love of those who knew her. One of her early associates, still living, speaks of her as being "very amiable and devotedly pious," and recalls the impressions which the uniform correctness of her deportment then made upon her mind,

more than fifty years ago. She witnessed the propriety of her daily life not only abroad, but in the familiar intercourse of the household, and remembers distinctly the restraint which her presence imposed when she was prompted to undue freedom of remark.

March 4th, 1817, she was united in marriage, at West Brookfield, to Thomas Thwing. In 1824, they removed to Ware, and there remained till 1837. In both places, they were welcomed as efficient laborers in the Church and benevolent enterprises of the day. The first Sabbath School in West Brookfield was formed in their house. Female prayer meetings, circles of prayer Sabbath evenings and at five o'clock in the morning, were held there before a church edifice was erected. On removing to Boston in 1837, a still larger field of labor was opened to both husband and wife. Though an invalid, she was ever at work. Tract visitors, missionaries, students and clergymen often shared her hospitalities for a longer or shorter time, besides the various benevolent societies of Salem Church, which frequently met with, and were entertained by her. But of these labors and of her last hours, the address which follows will more fully treat.

THE FUNERAL SERVICES

took place on Saturday afternoon, September 2nd. Prayer was offered at her late residence, and the body was taken to the meeting-house, corner of Salem and North Bennet streets. After an appropriate organ voluntary, the following hymn was sung by a select choir, led by Barna S. Snow, Esq., of Boston:

Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep!
From which none ever wake to weep;
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.

Asleep in Jesus, oh, how sweet
To be for such a slumber meet!
With holy confidence to sing
That death has lost its venomed sting.

Asleep in Jesus, peaceful rest!
Whose waking is supremely blest;
No fear, no woe shall dim that hour
That manifests the Saviour's power.

Asleep in Jesus! oh, for me
May such a blissful refuge be!
Securely shall my ashes lie,
And wait the summons from on high.

Rev. S. P. Fay, acting pastor of Salem Church, then read,

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoso liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write; from henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them. * * * * *

BEHOLD THY MOTHER! She hath brought up children, she hath lodged strangers, she hath washed the saints' feet, she hath relieved the afflicted, she hath diligently followed every good work; grave, sober, faithful in all things. The heart of her husband did safely trust in her, and her children rise up and call her blessed. She stretched out her hands to the poor, yea, she reached out her hands to the needy. She looked well to the ways of her *own* household, and ate not the bread of idleness. Her candle went not out by night. She opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness. * * * * * When the ear heard her, it blessed her. When the eye saw her, it gave witness. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came on her, and she caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. The memory of the just is blessed! Wherefore, comfort ye one another with these words.

ADDRESS.

BY REV. S. P. FAY.

It is not with sorrow that we are assembled for these obsequies. There are no tears in recalling the fact that she, who had more than measured the appointed span of life, who had almost entered upon her fourscore years, and who had for years waited for death, has at length been released from the burden, from the prison, from the body of this death. We cannot mourn that her imprisoned soul, at last set free, has flown away to heaven. Shall we mourn that the assiduity, which with unwearied tenderness waited on her feebleness, and which she tenderly recognized with responsive affection, is now at last relieved?

No; let us rather rejoice that the mortal has put on immortality, and that it only remains for us to bury in the bosom of its kindred earth this lifeless clay, from which the freed soul has gone to be with Christ. In this death there is no extinction of hope, no interruption of activity, no anguish of bereaved affection, and better than all, no awful questioning whether the departed was ready. Our tears are only those of love, of gratitude, and of homage to a blessed memory. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." This death is but the soul awaking from its long and restless sleep to its young and vigorous immortality. Hence, we have not a tear to shed for her who has gone to be forever with the Lord. She had long been looking for and expecting death, although at last it came suddenly. Her last sickness was short, and without any

marked features of interest, to which we may now refer. But we have what was far better, a long and beautiful life!

The larger portion of her six and seventy years was given to the service of her Redeemer. Born of an honored and pious ancestry, trained in her girlhood by watchful parents, instructed not only in the elements of a solid education, domestic and secular, but in the truths of religion, she early became a Christian. She joined the Congregational Church, West Brookfield, fifty-five years ago. She has been a member of this (Salem) Church since 1838. From the records of the church committee I find that her Christian experience was clear and decided. Her conviction of personal sinfulness seems to have been painfully vivid. She compared her distress on account of it to the raging of the sea before Jesus came into the ship to his disciples; but afterwards followed a great calm, that calm which so distinguished her whole Christian life and gave her that cheerfulness and patience for which she was characterized. In less than three years after her marriage, she and her husband accepted an appointment from the American Board, to labor among the Cherokee Indians. But sickness prevented her entering upon that work. The labors of her husband and her own, as well as those of her children, were to be put forth *here*, "beginning at Jerusalem." Her home has been with us for nearly thirty years. Her life has been intimately connected with Salem Church. Although in feeble health, she has not been idle. Her active usefulness has been manifested through the Maternal and other Associations, and in entertaining numerous guests at her house. She was of unspeakable blessing to her family. If these two "Sisters of Charity" have been of service to the community and the church, if this only son has been an honor to the ministry, if this husband has been able to endure hard labor with but small remuneration, and yet keep faith in God and sustain a cheerful spirit, they all owe it largely to her ceaseless prayers, wise counsels and hopeful spirit.

In May, 1863, this honored mother in Israel seemed very near her end, even in sight of the gates of the Celestial City. She then went through her immediate conflict with

death. She conversed cheerfully with her family about her departure, and "gave commandment concerning her bones." But, unexpectedly to herself and others, she recovered her strength in a good measure, so as to be able occasionally to come to this sanctuary, which has been for so many years her place of worship. Four weeks ago she heard a sermon from a former beloved pastor, Rev. Joseph H. Towne, D. D., upon the resurrection of the body and that future life upon which she has now so triumphantly entered. She enjoyed this last discourse exceedingly, little thinking how near that life was to her; but on Thursday morning last, (August 31st, 1865,) after but four days' confinement to her room, unexpectedly to all she passed away and entered upon a glorious immortality. And now,

"After life's fitful fever she sleeps well."

She has gone to join her family, of which she was the seventh and the last to go over the flood.

Of her last moments there is little to be said. But one of her children was with her when she was seized with her last sickness, the other two being in Maine. She expressed great joy that her absent son reached home the afternoon before she departed. He offered prayer and conversed with her enough to know that she had no fears of death. After prayer he repeated to her a part of the hymn beginning:

'I am waiting by the river,
I am watching by the shore;
Only waiting for the boatman,
Soon he'll come and bear me o'er."

During most of Wednesday night her reason was clouded, and her articulation almost unintelligible. At two o'clock Thursday morning she fell into a quiet sleep, from which, without pain, at six o'clock, she entered the saint's everlasting rest.

"She passed thro' morning's golden gate,
And walked in Paradise."

Her husband, younger daughter and only son were with her as she breathed her last. The latter closed her eyes and

broke the silence of the chamber of death by repeating that triumphant doxology of Paul which such a scene must ever elicit: "THANKS BE TO GOD WHO GIVETH US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Her loving nature and her habitual nearness to God, her constant cheerfulness and hopefulness, her wisdom and prudence, her patience under increasing bodily infirmities — virtues which only the grace of God enabled her to illustrate— are a rich legacy for her children. Tenderly and devoutly did she feel in her old age that God had blessed her all the days of her life. How much she loved her husband and children, and how tenderly they loved her, all who know them will testify.

Our faith now beholds her entering into that great glory, to realize there the full fruition of that hope, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness."

My Dear Brother, There is no need I should address much in way of consolation to you. You will, it is true, miss the wife of your youth and the mother of your children, with whom you have walked hand in hand and heart in heart these forty-eight years. She has indeed strengthened your hands when you have been ready to faint. By her economy and labor, she has been an invaluable help. But you, who have so often comforted others, know well the sources of consolation. I know the everlasting arms will be around you, and that you will soon be with her!

This only Son, and these affectionate Daughters tenderly mourn their loss. But religion has taught you to appreciate the privilege of having such a mother. The prayers she offered for you, from the first hour of your lives to the day of her departure; the example of faith and cheerful Christian devotedness she set before you; and her instructive words, are hallowed in your memories. She has now led the way to glory. You have now a mother in heaven, who tenderly watches your labors and struggles! May you follow her when your work is completed. May your last end be like hers!

Farewell, sacred relics of a loved and honored wife and mother! May your sleep be peaceful and undisturbed until

the last trumpet shall call you to the assembly of the just. There we shall meet you, — not as now, cold, lifeless, and corruptible, but vital in every part. And thou, immortal spirit, farewell! death has but taken thee aside and unrobed thee, that, being washed and sanctified and justified, Grace may robe thee anew and get thee ready to join with us the glorious retinue of Christ in his day of triumph! Farewell, till God restores thee to us!

After prayer the choir sung the hymn beginning

"Sweet is the scene when Christians die,"

to the tune "Federal Street." Friends present then had the opportunity of looking on the serene, pleasant face of the departed. Flowers of richest fragrance were scattered within and without the coffin, and others adorned the pulpit. These seemed fitting, rather than funeral mourning, for she had forever passed from the land of the dying, and joyously entered the land of the living. The inscription on the coffin read,

Grace W. Thwing.

AGED 76 YEARS.

ASLEEP IN JESUS.

SERVICES AT MOUNT AUBURN.

The remains, followed by the family and friends, reached Mount Auburn at half past four. The slant rays of a warm September sun played through the branches of the waving elms, the walnut, and the linden trees, as we bore the precious dust to its final resting place. The family lot is on Arethusa path, No. 3307. There devout and loving hands had brought her to her burial, but never did a burial seem less associated with gloom. Leaning on his staff, and on the friendly arm of his pastor, the aged father, with his children and grand-children about him, stood by the dead; while a quartette of sweet voices, sung to the tune "Heber,"

"There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign."

The calm face of the departed saint, which was turned towards the voices led by her son, seemed clothed with the sweetness and peace of sleep, or as if she were listening again to the sounds which she loved on earth to hear so well. But beyond those autumnal skies her spirit had passed to be forever with the Lord. As we sung of

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,"

and as our eyes took in the delightful prospect before us, the

groves and meadows, the flowing Charles, and the villages beyond the river, we rejoiced to know that she now had entered the Paradise of God.

Words of prayer followed, and as the sun was hastening to its setting, we each of us took a flower from the fragrant clusters, "beheld the sepulchre, and how the body was laid," then left the sacred enclosure, fervently breathing the prayer, "let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers."

SERVICES AT QUINCY

were held at the Hancock Street Church, Sabbath morning, September 10th, appropriate to an occasion so tenderly interesting to pastor and people.

The exercises were opened by singing a hymn selected by the choir:

Mother! though from yonder sky
Cometh neither voice nor cry,
Yet we know for thee this day
Every pain hath passed away.

Not for thee shall tears be given,
Child of God, and heir of heaven!
For He gave thee sweet release,
Thine the Christian's death of peace.

Well we know thy living faith
Had the power to conquer death,
As a living rose may bloom
By the border of the tomb.

Mother! in that solemn trust
We commend thee dust to dust;
In that faith we wait till, risen,
Thou shalt meet us all in heaven.

DISCOURSE.

BY REV. EDWARD P. THWING.

John 19: 27. Behold thy mother.

There are few incidents in the life of our Redeemer more deeply affecting than this scene at the cross. We hardly know which to admire the more, the maternal or the filial love; or to tell which suffered the greater pangs, at that moment, mother or son. We know that in the fulfilment of Simeon's prophecy, Mary must have endured ineffable agony, as "the sword pierced through her own soul also." How intense must have been her love to this her first-born! Towards the evil and unthankful a mother's love goes out in all embracing, all forgiving power; but how much deeper must have been her affection for this "holy thing" born of her, alone among her other children pure and undefiled, "the son of God." With what fondness, not to say pride, did she watch the growth of that noble body and the progress of that beautiful life! We are so used to the blemishes and weaknesses which attach themselves to a sinful nature and a body tainted with corruption, that we can hardly conceive of the angelic grace and purity of this, the "fairest of the children of men." Mary's love must have been intense, for it had not only an exalted object on which to fasten itself, but what is still more, it enjoyed a cordial reciprocation. No mother on earth ever had such returns of filial affection, and hence we may suppose that their fellowship was incomparably sweet.

That son was now nailed to the cross; but as Dr. Adams has said, "something stronger than nails held *her* to the cross — a mother's love; something more excruciating than nails and a spear distracted her — the sufferings of her child."

What a wealth of affection was exhibited in Christ's commitment of that cherished mother to the beloved disciple! The lesson is for our instruction to-day. Happy are those of you who still have a mother to care for and to love.

What the loss of one is, none can tell who has never experienced the sorrow of separation. The more endearing the fellowship, the more complete the reciprocation, the more frequent the intercourse, the more vivid will be the realization of one's loss.

Five and thirty years ago, my eyes opened to catch the gaze of two loving eyes full of maternal pride and affection. From that day till death closed them, or rather these hands closed them, those eyes have followed me with unspeakable fondness. But twice has the son been away from her side so long as three months at a time; and, for the most part, visits have been enjoyed once a week, or oftener.

The memory of the last sixteen years is very sweet to me. It covers the period of preparation for, and enjoyment of, the work of the ministry. It was her desire from the first that I should choose this work. After thirteen years of school-boy life she with disappointment saw me choosing the business of a merchant. After two years and more, when those steps were retraced, she rejoiced to see me leave the paths of money-getting — already promising success — for the less lucrative but holier employment of preaching Christ crucified. The memory of this portion of my life and hers is also grateful to review, because assured by her that I have been of real service to her. I refer not to physical comfort merely, but to peace of mind. For instance, she confessed at one time that she had always looked with dread on death, and felt the bondage of fear, till after the subject was put by me in a new and less repulsive light, about two years ago, since which that fear no longer troubled her. She now has finished her course and enjoys in heaven the nobler ministrations of Christ, the author of her salvation.

Finished!

A life well rounded and complete, full of years and ripe in fruitage, and a character to whose natural grace and sweetness were added the charms of a renewed soul united to Christ. The departure of one so ripe for heaven is not a fit occasion for lamentation and tears. No!

— "the Thracians wisely gave
Tears to the birth-couch, Triumph to the grave!"

So, too, may we rejoice; for it is not the Christian, but death, that dies.

When Isabella Graham parted with her eldest daughter, having listened to the hymn which the departing saint sung till death closed the song, and having seen the flight of the spirit from the body, she raised her eyes and hands to heaven, exclaiming, in the triumph of faith, "I wish you joy, my darling!" then took refreshment and retired to rest.

Such quiet trust and joyful faith we are permitted to illustrate and enjoy. If glory and immortality are the portion of this dear departed one, why should we mourn?

The sketch of her life is omitted, being the same in substance as has already been given.

Dear friends, I present this sketch, not to gratify pride or curiosity, but to honor both the memory of the sainted dead, and the grace of God in which she so richly shared. Being dead, she yet speaketh. Let me briefly notice two thoughts suggested. One is, the *irresistible power wielded by a Christian mother.* The consistent, exemplary life of a parent, especially that of a mother, is a power second to none in the whole range of human influences. Sophistry cannot baffle it, argument cannot gainsay it, time cannot obliterate it. An infidel once tried to seduce a young man from the Christian practices taught him by a Christian mother. He argued, he laughed at him; but in vain, for though the young man could not answer his objections, he knew that the religion his mother lived, and by which in her trials she was sustained, *must* be divine. His language was, "The Bible does that for her which infidelity *never* could do, and by the grace of God, I will abide by the words that my mother taught me."

Another young man, who felt himself to be very wicked, expressed his appreciation of a consistent life in these singular words. Comparing his mother with another lady who was a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God, he said, "I am a sad, ungodly dog myself, but I would not, for all the world, be the son of an irreligious mother." I say then, Behold a Mother, as the centre of an irresistible and

undying influence. Live, Mothers and Fathers, so that the image which you project on the minds of your children shall be such as you will not fear to have eternity make indelible! Live so that they will rise up and call you blessed. Rest not till every one of your household is an heir of eternal life; nor then be content till you behold their sanctified energies consecrated to the Lord that bought them, reproducing in their life and labors his glorious spirit of consecration.

Again. Let me say *to those who still have an object on which they may expend their filial affection*, Behold thy mother! You may not have her long on earth to love. The remembrance of unkindness or neglect biteth at last "like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." In reference to the departed, I can say with another already quoted, "I see many things which I should not have said or done, and many things which I could have done better; but while I say this, I must say, in justice to the grace of God, that as I stood over that parent's coffin, and when I left her in the tomb, I could not find in my recollections anything with which to reproach myself as an unkind and undutiful child. This is all, which, as a sinner, I dare to say, for the heart is deceitful above all things; but I must add that my mother's kind expressions of gratitude and love for any conduct which she was pleased to regard as dutiful, are now the richest treasures in my memory. Her face towards me is not made by my conscience to wear any coldness. I did not despise her when she was old."

Am I addressing any, who, forgetful of the undischarged debt of obligation they owe their mother, regard her wishes as wearisome restraints, her wants as burdens, and her infirmities, it may be, intolerable? I have known sons who were impatient of a mother's gentlest control, and whose disrespect stung her sensibilities most deeply. I have seen daughters, by their frivolity and wantonness, their silly love of display, their loose and roving habits, planting thorns in a mother's pillow. Oh reflect, if any such hear me, how remorseful your memories will be, when you see those now pleading eyes closed in death; the hands that long ministered to you, folded across a motionless breast, and the lips that

sung your infant lullabies, soothed you in sickness, prayed for you in danger and counselled you so wisely, sealed in the icy coldness of the grave !

Sincere may be your sorrow then, loud your protestations of love, still louder your call for forgiveness, but it will be unavailing ! During remaining life, and, unless God pardon, throughout eternity you will drag about with you like a heavy chain these remorseful but ineffaceable memories.

And finally, beloved friends, let us all come more completely under the powers of the world to come. Time is fleeting. Our parents, our children and our friends we shall not have with us long. Behold, then, thy Mother, thy Father, thy Child or thy Neighbor. To-day he is, to-morrow all that remains of him here may be claimed by the grave. Eternity — to some of us, it may be — is just at hand. Let every plan be adjusted to this great truth. Let every act receive a complexion from it. Let our social duties be discharged with reference to it, in the fear and love of God. Then sweet indeed will be our family fellowships here, and unutterably sweet our meeting above !

IN MEMORIAM.

Died at Quincy, Thursday, Sept. 21, 1865, Herbert, youngest child of Rev. Edward P. and Susan M. Thwing. Taken ill the day of his grandmother's death, he died on the same day of the week, and on the same day of her funeral, three weeks later, was laid by her side. The oldest and the youngest of the family were not long separated. Two summers passed over his head, and he was taken to the land where endless summers smile. Rev. J. H. Means, of Dorchester, offered prayer at the house, 10 o'clock, Saturday morning, and the body was carried to the Chapel at Mount Auburn, where, at 2 P. M., Rev. S. P. Fay conducted the funeral exercises. After reading selections of Scripture, he offered brief but touching remarks in reference to the circumstances of the departure of this cherished child, who passed from his father's study, where his last days were spent, peacefully and joyfully to his Father's house above, to be welcomed by one but lately admitted there, and by Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." After prayer, the remains were taken to their already consecrated resting place. Standing over his lowly bed, a few voices, led by that of his grandfather, sung to the tune of "Ward" the following hymn:

As the sweet flower that scents the morn,
But withers in the rising day;
Thus lovely was this infant's dawn,
Thus swiftly fled its life away.

It died ere its expanding soul
Had ever burned with wrong desires,
Had ever spurned at heaven's control,
Or ever quenched its sacred fires.

It died to sin, it died to cares,
But for a moment felt the rod:
O mourner! such, the Lord declares,—
Such are the children of our God.